

FINANCIAL PARTNERS SERVICES

The Financial Partners Services has primary responsibility for providing best in business service to lenders and guaranty agencies while maintaining strong oversight and providing comprehensive partner support. In addition, FPS maintains a network of effective and satisfied customers and guarantee agencies. The Service is divided into the following organizations:

Partner Services Group
Partner Systems Group
National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) Group
Financial Partner Regions (including Regions I, II, IV, V, VI & IX);

In addition, Financial Partners has two non-organizational functional areas:

Financial Analysis
State Agency Liaison

Financial Analysis

Financial Analysis is responsible for ensuring that lenders' and guaranty agencies payments are timely and accurate and for developing and implementing policies and procedures for the delivery of student loan program, namely the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP). To accomplish this mission, Financial Analysis in coordination with FSA/CFO:

- Receives and processes financial transaction data from lenders;
- Makes interest and special allowance payments to lenders;
- Tracks timely processing of all such transactions to avoid penalty interest liabilities;
- Receives financial transaction data from guaranty agencies;
- Processes information necessary to make payments to GAs;
- Prepares and compile financial transaction reports;
- Processes system 'Year-end closing';
- Produces financial reports and records that initiate external financial payments;
- Identifies business requirements to develop new system modifications needed to implement legislative/regulatory changes;
- Initiates and maintains program and systems changes to the electronic, Financial Management System, FMS (ORACLE) as it relates to Forms 2000 and LAP/LARS;
- Monitors and audits changes related to Forms 2000 and LAP/LARS via FMS configuration management system;
- Communicates with guaranty agencies to process newly-admitted lenders and to maintain current vendor profile data within FMS;
- Incorporates performance data as indicators of program success in meeting legislative and regulatory requirements after consulting with Enterprise Performance Management Services;

- Provides program analysis assistance to region and headquarter staff, as well as members of the student aid community, by interpreting legislative and regulatory changes that effect program operations;
- Writes instructions for electronic 'data collection' mechanisms and disseminate to GAs and lenders;
- Monitors funds availability data within FMS for GA and lender payments, such as fund obligation, disbursement, and receipt data;
- Communicates proposed and existing FM initiatives with internal and external customers via the FP intranet and internet websites;
- Writes FMS queries to prepare and compile financial transaction data and analyzes the results;
- Evaluates trends and prepare reports to advise senior management;
- Participate in systems testing to ensure modification compliance with FM business processes;
- Reconcile FFEL funding/transactions with related systems; and
- Train internal and external users in new system development.

State Agency Liaison

State Agency Liaison is responsible for providing support and communications to state agencies to ensure a network of effective and satisfied state agency partners. To accomplish this mission, State Agency Liaison:

- Works with state guaranty and non-guaranty agencies to ensure appropriate levels of communication between FSA and the agencies.
- Provides state agencies with a liaison and advocacy function within Education and FSA.
- Coordinates communications and interaction among state agencies, the schools, the financial aid community, and FSA.
- Provides technical assistance and support to state agencies.
- Works with guaranty agencies to implement pilot programs (such as VFAS, Blanket Certification as required by regulations or any other initiatives).

Partner Services Group

The Partner Services Group is responsible for identifying and analyzing major issues affecting lender and guarantor financial stability, and for the implementation of program and financial reviews of guarantor agencies and lenders on the proper administration and management of Title IV programs. Ensures compliant administration and management of FFEL programs through partnership with guaranty agencies, services, trustees, secondary markets, and financial institutions by providing support to, and participating with the Financial Partners regional offices in oversight functions, technical assistance, customer service and program evaluation. To accomplish this mission, Partner Services Group:

- Provides general participation support to financial institutions, e.g., policy interpretation, technical assistance.

- Interfaces with financial trade organizations as partners.
- Manages and analyzes risk.
- Maintains risk models to assess the need for program reviews and/or technical assistance.
- Conducts joint program reviews and training (Department of Education, lenders, and guaranty agencies).
- Monitors lender and guarantee agency compliance with eligibility guidelines and procedures.
- Provides technical assistance.
- Compiles and analyzes partner contact data (complaint information and inquiry trend data).
- Identifies and communicates service improvement opportunities including quickly responding to partners.
- Oversees trending and program data review.
- Manages the Electronic Records Management project.
- Issues and maintains cohort default rates for guaranty agencies and lenders.
- Completes Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act Requests.
- Monitors and reviews external and internal audit activities including OIG, GAS, A-233 (single and statewide reports).

Partner Systems Group

The Partner Systems Group is responsible for providing contract management-related activities to support the ongoing maintenance and operations of the Federal Family Education Loan System (FFEL). To accomplish this mission, Partner Systems Group:

- Works with vendors to lower the costs associated with FFEL processing.
- Keeps informed of emerging technologies and business process innovations and analyzes their potential for streamlining Financial Partners operations.
- Continually evaluates business processes for service improvement and cost reduction opportunities.
- Analyzes and develops best in practice methods for data exchange and access with Financial Partners.
- Manages the design, development and maintenance of a web-based portal through which eligible FSA financial partners can access information and data systems that serve the student lending community.

National Student Loan Data Systems (NSLDS) Group

The NSLDS Group is responsible for designing, implementing and operating the National Student Loan Data System on behalf of FSA. In addition, responsible for performance engineering of NSLDS to provide the best service at the least cost accompanied with customer satisfaction in the products and services NSLDS delivers. The NSLDS Group

is divided into two teams: Legacy Team and Re-engineering Team. To accomplish this mission, the NSLDS Group:

- Formulates new program management standards and analytical approaches.
- Plans and directs the architecture for evaluation and measurement efforts.
- Plans and directs requirements analysis.
- Develops and maintains program plans.
- Represents Financial Partners and NSLDS at seminars, symposia and conferences.
- Maintains the currency of NSLDS to FSA's IT standards and policy with regular updates based on changing business requirements, technology evolution and new/emerging standards.
- Establish re-engineering architecture in accordance with business requirements.
- Align NSLDS re-engineering in accordance with enterprise data strategy and emerging technology standards.
- Provides state agencies with a liaison and advocacy function within Education and FSA.
- Coordinates communications and interaction among state agencies, the schools, the financial aid community, and FSA.
- Provides technical assistance and support to state agencies.
- Works with guaranty agencies to implement pilot programs (such as VFAS, Blanket Certification) as required by regulations or any other initiatives.

Financial Partners Regions (I, II, IV, V, VI, IX)

Financial Partners Regions is responsible for the implementation of program and financial reviews of guaranty agencies and FFELP lenders and related agencies or organizations. Provides technical assistance to these groups on the proper administration and management of the FFEL program. Identifies and analyzes major issues affecting lender and guarantor compliance with program requirements, and develops national priorities, goals, and guidelines for monitoring the programmatic stability of the Federal student loan guarantors. To accomplish this, Financial Partners Regions:

- Conduct program and financial reviews of guaranty agencies and FFELP lenders related agencies or organizations.
- Monitors on a consistent basis guaranty agencies through on-site reviews and analysis of various reports from the agencies, to provide early warning of program compliance and due diligence problems and signs of financial instability, and to recommend and undertake necessary corrective actions.
- Works closely with and/or refers cases to OIG.
- Reviews reports of program violations and evaluates regional findings and recommendations for consistency and conformance to policy.
- Recommends actions to resolve or avoid financial and program compliance problems faced by guarantors and compliance of lenders.

- Provides technical assistance and service to lenders, guaranty agencies, the general public, and congressional offices, through site visits, follow-up reports, correspondence and telephone communications.